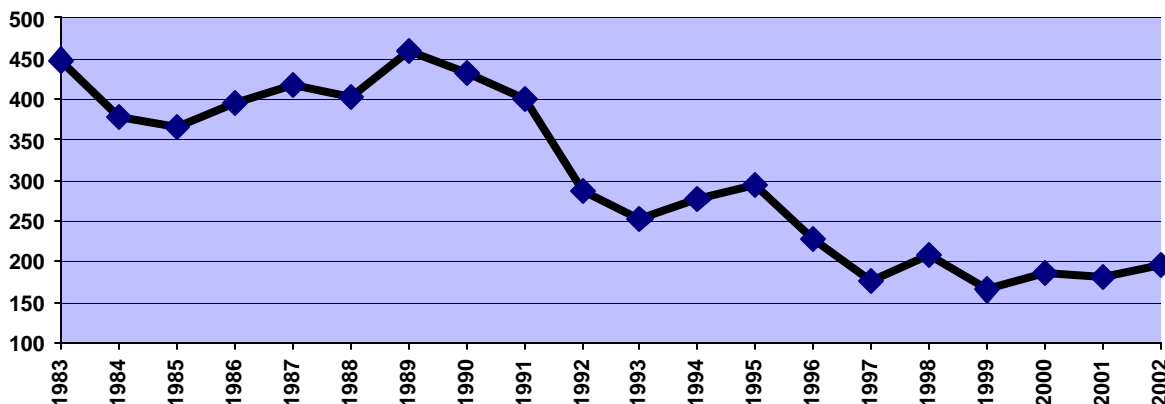


ROBBERY

Robbery is the taking or attempted taking of anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear. This crime includes muggings, purse snatchings, and bank hold-ups.

Robbery in Cambridge, 1983-2002



181 reported in 2001 · 195 reported in 2002

Robbery is theft in which the culprit confronts his/her victim and steals the victim's property through the use of force or the threat of force. Robbery includes "muggings" and "hold-ups," though the offender does not need to display a weapon (and about half of them do not) for the crime to be categorized as a robbery.

Robbery is usually committed on the street, in the dark, by an offender or offenders who the victim does not know, as was the case in 27 of the street robberies this past year. The confrontational, threatening nature of the crime has a strong influence on the behavior of the public. Robbery is one of the crimes most often considered by a citizen when he or she gauges the general "safety" of an area.

For the purposes of analysis, the crime of Robbery is divided into two categories: Commercial Robbery and Street Robbery. Commercial Robbery makes up approximately 20 percent of the robbery total in Cambridge. Unlike assault, robbery statistics

are fairly sound; robbery victims are very likely to report the crime.

Over the past five years, there have been less than 200 robberies each year, with 1998 being the only

	2001	2002	% Change
Commercial Robbery	34	40	+ 18%
Street Robbery	147	155	+ 5%
Total	181	195	+ 8%

exception when there were 208 robberies. In 2002, a total of 195 robberies were reported, which is a difference of only fourteen

incidents from 2001. Nearly 80% of this year's robberies were classified as street robberies, which heated up towards the end of the year.

As can be seen in the graph above, Cambridge has been experiencing an overall decrease in robbery throughout the city. Even though an increase of 8% was registered in 2002 and the number of commercial and street robberies may fluctuate year to year, the city has been experiencing a 60% decline in robberies since 1989. The majority of activity for this crime took place during the last four months of the year, including 10 commercial robberies and 69 street robberies. The reasons behind this infiltration towards the end of the year can be seen in the following sections.

COMMERCIAL ROBBERY

Commercial Robbery describes the taking or attempted taking of anything of value from the care or custody of a commercial or financial establishment. Examples of this crime include the bank heist, the cab stick-up, and the convenience store hold-up.

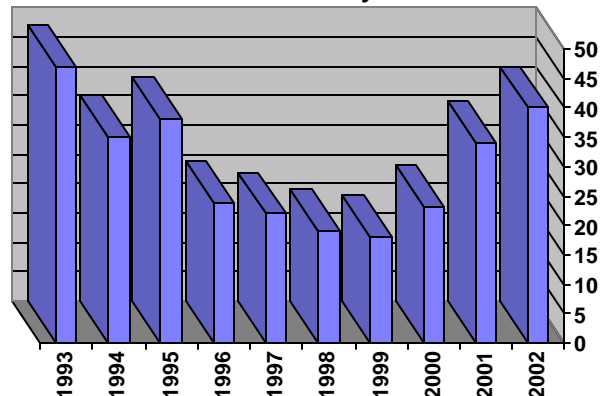
From 1970 to 1990, Cambridge averaged 100 commercial robberies annually. Since then, the number has plunged to 40 percent of that average. Nationally, commercial robbery accounts for 24 percent of total robberies; in Cambridge, commercial robberies made up only 21 percent of the 2002 robbery total.

Bank robberies experienced the highest number of incidents in 2002 when compared to statistics from the past five years. In fact, eight of the fourteen robberies have occurred during the last three months of the year, from October to December. Two banks were robbed one day after the other during the first week of September. The suspect in these robberies was later arrested in Lawrence for other offenses and admitted to the two Cambridge bank robberies he was responsible for. Another notable arrest occurred in mid-November when a Cambridge resident signed a written confession for a spree of bank robberies in and around Boston, one of which was of a Cambridge bank. The last time a spree of this tenacity occurred was last year in 2001 following the events of September 11th. During this spree, seven bank robberies took place between September 11th and the end of December, which is an impressably high number.

One of the most notable commercial robberies occurred in December when the Starbucks in Harvard Sq. was robbed at gunpoint. During this heist, the first suspect came out of the bathroom yielding a handgun and was met by a second suspect who had been waiting outside. The two men then ordered all four employees into the bathroom and ordered someone to open the business' safe. Once the men got the money from the safe, the employees were restrained with plastic handcuffs and were herded into the bathroom while the suspects fled. This incident followed a spree of robberies that had been occurring during the summer months in the Boston Metro area.

Cambridge statistics reflect the national decline in commercial robberies since the 1980s. A number of factors account for this trend, including increased security measures at gas stations (plexi-glass booths), convenience stores (drop-safes, silent alarms), and banks (dye packs, better surveillance cameras); the Cambridge Police Department's Park & Walk program, which increases police visibility in vulnerable areas may also be an attributing factor to the historical decline of commercial robberies in Cambridge.

Commercial Robbery 1993-2002



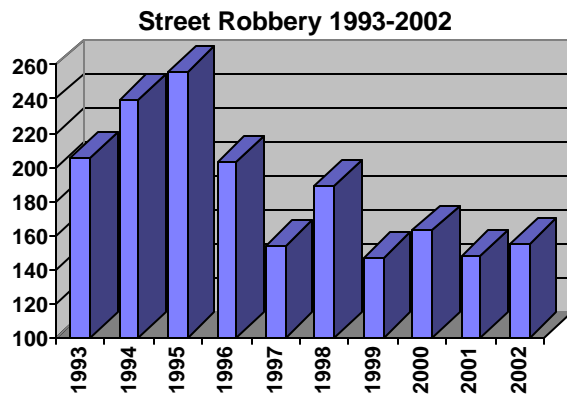
Commercial Robberies by Location Type

Type	2000	2001	2002
Bank/Armored Car	4	10	14
Bar/Restaurant	1	3	5
Cab	3	1	1
Convenience/Gas	8	8	7
Drug Store	1	1	1
Fast Food	0	2	1
Hotel/Motel	2	1	1
Jewelry Store	0	0	2
Liquor Store	1	1	0
Misc. Retail	2	5	7
Parking Garage	1	2	1
Total	23	34	40

PREVENTING COMMERCIAL ROBBERY

- Keep cash to a minimum with frequent, irregular deposits or a "drop safe." Use visible stickers or signs to advertise your cash control policy.
- Install visible closed circuit television cameras near cash registers.
- Keep your establishment well lit at night. Clear any obstructions that prevent someone on the street from seeing what is happening inside the store.
- Designate a small bundle of cash "bait money." Record the serial numbers of these bills and make sure you give this cash to robbers.
- During a robbery, remember that a robber is a bundle of nerves and, therefore, is very dangerous. Instruct your employees to obey a robber's instructions calmly and politely.
- Have employees memorize a signal or "code" to alert each other to potential or actual robbers.
- If robbed, try to memorize as much as possible about the robber's description, including his vehicle and his direction of flight.

STREET ROBBERY



robberies in 2002, fifty involved the use or threat of a weapon, which were a firearm (19), knife (27), bottle/glass (2), or a bar/pipe (2). Over the past ten years, this crime has never exceeded 300 robberies; the last spike Cambridge experienced was in 1995, when there were 256 robberies.

A long-term trend analysis of street robberies in Cambridge reveals a number of frequently recurring scenarios. The number in parenthesis after the category indicates how frequently that categorization occurred in Cambridge this past year:

Acquaintance Robberies (5): Related to Domestic Robbery and the Homeless Robbery (see below), Acquaintance Robberies are committed by someone the victim knows. Common scenarios include drinking buddies robbing each other after a night at the bar, friends turning on each other, drug disputes, and robberies between co-workers.

Bikejackings (1): In this scenario, any number of attackers will approach a young (10–15 years old) male victim on a bicycle and, through force of numbers, knives, or other weapons, will demand the victim's bike. Often, the attacker simply shoves the victim off of his bicycle and takes it. In a good portion of bikejackings, the victim knows his attacker.

Bully Boys (15): Juvenile robberies of intimidation. In most occurrences, the victim knows the perpetrators. Committed by and against school-aged youths, they occur on the way home from school, or at playgrounds, malls, parks, and skating rinks. Two to four juvenile males usually strong-arm their victim, stealing such things as his jacket, hat, or lunch money.

Carjacking (4): In this scenario, a lone predator will approach a victim entering or exiting his or her car, or when stopped at a traffic light. In no hesitant terms, the robber will order the victim out of the vehicle and demand the keys.

Dial-A-Victim (2): These robberies target delivery service personnel. In these situations, suspects who are usually brandishing a knife or gun intercept a delivery person before entering a phony location.

Street Robbery describes all robberies committed against individuals. A “street” robbery does not necessarily have to occur on the street, though more than 75 percent of them do. Examples of street robberies are “muggings,” “carjackings,” and “purse snatchings.”

As with commercial robbery, Cambridge experienced the majority of street robberies during the last three months of 2002. More specifically, December (23 robberies) experienced a rash of robberies in and around Harvard Sq. where groups of youths were targeting unsuspecting individuals whom were by themselves. These victims were typically walking along the street when they were approached and demanded to hand over what they had (cash, wallet, etc.). Of the 155 street

Home Invasions (5): One of the most serious robbery types, home invasions, involves robbers entering their victim's homes, usually at night, subduing the residents (sometimes by tying them), and robbing the home. Fortunately, this type of robbery is rare in Cambridge.

Homeless Robberies (2): The homeless robbery is a sad scenario reflecting urban life in the 1990s: homeless people robbing each other. The majority of these robberies occur in the vicinity of Central and Harvard Squares, or at various shelters. The victim is usually acquainted with the perpetrator, and in many cases, both are intoxicated. Property stolen ranges from a bottle of wine to a blanket to a pair of shoes. Like domestic robberies, homeless robberies are sometimes precipitated by past debts, real or imaginary.

Pack Robberies (20): In this situation, a group of three to eight young males will stalk victims around shopping malls, MBTA stations, streets, and recreational areas. The majority of these robberies occur on Friday or Saturday nights, when the “pack” is returning from a dance or party. The robberies are not always premeditated, but the victim—typically a male between the ages of 15 and 25, walking alone—simply ends up on the wrong place at the wrong time. Weapons are seldom used, but strong-arm tactics are applied. Usually, the victim is knocked to the ground or ordered to lie down.

Predatory Robberies: This type of street robbery has the most pronounced effect on a citizen's perception of safety. Predatory robberies are synonymous with "muggings." In the typical scenario, one or two men approach the victim with knife or gun and demand cash. The danger of serious injury is ever present. Cambridge typically experiences more two-person predatory robberies than any other type.

"Crude" means that the robbers were edgy, unprepared, and unpredictable – 21 crude robberies occurred in 2002. In "professional" predatory robberies, the robbers are collected, efficient, and effective – 60 of these incidents took place in 2002.

Purse Snatch (19): The purse-snatcher is generally unarmed, and has little intent to cause injury. After "casing" a victim—a female carrying a purse, bag, or wallet—this robber approaches quick from behind—on foot or on a bicycle—and snatches the item out of the victim's hands or off her shoulder before she has a chance to react, often effecting a "body check" in the process.

Because of the velocity of this type of robbery, the crime analysis unit has divided the predatory robberies even further into "crude" and "professional" sub-categories.

GEOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF STREET ROBBERIES

AREA	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
East Cambridge	20	20	12	13	18
M.I.T. Area	1	1	2	4	0
Inman/Harrington	14	19	18	10	10
Area 4	36	38	36	25	30
Cambridgeport	27	24	27	28	15
Mid-Cambridge	20	6	18	18	18
Riverside	20	11	21	11	19
Agassiz	9	1	2	6	6
Peabody	14	8	8	12	8
West Cambridge	6	3	7	10	14
North Cambridge	18	14	9	9	12
Cambridge Highlands	1	1	1	0	1
Strawberry Hill	3	1	2	1	4

DECREASES

2002 witnessed a displacement of street robberies away from traditional "hot spots", adding the already high numbers in neighborhoods that typically experience a substantial amount of robberies.

MIT and **Peabody** have each experienced a decrease in the number of street robberies this past year, while **Cambridgeport** experienced the most dramatic drop from 28 robberies in 2001 to 15 in 2002. This drop is unusual because only one other time has Cambridgeport experienced less than 20 street robberies in a year, that being in 1996. Cambridgeport has annually averaged 26 robberies in the 1990's, which were concentrated in the upper section of the region between Mass Ave. & Franklin St., which was not replicated in 2002. Cambridgeport did, however, follow the city-wide trend in experiencing more street robberies in December, when four occurred in this neighborhood, the most of any month in Cambridgeport. Extra patrols, multiple Park & Walks, priority investigations, neighborhood redevelopment,

and a plethora of other factors led to this impressive decline. Typically the neighboring neighborhoods benefit and also experience a decline in activity, but this was only true for MIT, which did not experience one robbery in 2002.

INCREASES

Seven neighborhoods experienced an increase in street robberies over the past year, ranging from one to eight incidents more than in 2001. The **Cambridge Highlands** did not experience one street robbery in 2001, but did, however, experience one incident in May of 2002. This incident transpired in the elevator at a local movie theatre when the victim suffered the loss of a necklace after the culprit brandished a knife.

A general increase in robberies around Harvard Square and Quincy Square affected the **West Cambridge** and **Riverside** neighborhoods heavily, with respective increases of four and eight incidents. Clusters are evident along Brattle, Mount Auburn, and Church Streets, and are generally predatory in nature.

Analysis shows that both of these neighborhoods experienced the highest frequency of robberies in the

a group of both male and female juveniles. On other occasions, it was strictly two males in their teens who

to rob their victims at night.

PREVENTING STREET ROBBERY

- Try to avoid walking alone on the street after dark. If you must walk alone at night, use well-lit roads, with as much car traffic as possible, and walk near the curb.
- When streets are relatively empty, make eye contact with everyone you pass, and keep yourself an arm's length away from them. Walk briskly and confidently.
- At night, avoid public parks, vacant lots, and areas with excessive trees and bushes.
- When waiting for a bus or subway, if the station is deserted, keep your back against a wall in a well-lit section.
- When walking to your car at night, have your keys in your hand and be ready to open the door.
- Try to avoid using ATMs late at night. If you must, try to pick an ATM in an attended location, such as a supermarket or mall. At the very least, make sure the ATM is well lit, and be aware of any people "loitering" in the area. Try to avoid going by yourself.
- At home, before answering the door, check the peephole or side window to make sure you know your visitor.
- Keep your doors locked when driving your car. If someone approaches your car while stopped, be prepared to step on the gas.
- Don't carry your purse loosely around your shoulder. Clutch it tightly under your arm or, better yet, avoid carrying a purse and keep a wallet in your pocket instead.
- If you *are* robbed, obey the robber's instructions. Keeping your cash in a separate money clip or pouch will allow you to hand it over without sacrificing your credit cards, identification, and personal papers.
- Try to memorize your robber's physical features, clothing, motor vehicle, and direction of flight. Call the police from the nearest available telephone.

Six Street Robbery "Hot Spots"

Based on data over the last three years

1. **CENTRAL SQUARE**, specifically the area of Massachusetts Avenue between Main Street and Inman Street, extending one block on either side (Bishop Allen Drive to the north, Green Street to the south). Though street robbery has declined dramatically in this area the past year, it remains a "hot spot." Mostly predatory and homeless robberies, with the target time frame between 7:30 P.M. and midnight.
2. **CAMBRIDGE SIDE GALLERIA**, particularly the First Street entrance, including the Lechmere MBTA Station area. These are usually juveniles robbing each other between 3:30 P.M. and 6:00 P.M.
3. **HARVARD SQUARE**, around Church Street and Brattle Street. Predatory robberies in the late evening mixed with early evening purse snatchings.
4. **RUSSELL FIELD AND THE ALEWIFE MBTA STATION**. Late evening robberies here. Predatory and pack robbers target people leaving the station and crossing through the field.
5. **HOYT FIELD** and surrounding streets. Generally a late night (10:00 P.M. to 2:00 A.M.) problem involving predators and older packs.
6. **WESTERN AGASSIZ**, including Kirkland Street, Irving Street, Bryant Street, Francis Avenue, and Museum Street. We experience at least one pack or [REDACTED] is area, which is otherwise quiet.

Street Robberies throughout the City, 2002

